
Civil society displayed a bold and united front at the UN Multistakeholder Hearing on NCDs and Mental Health

Langue Anglais

On 2 May NCD Alliance (NCDA) and its members from across the globe leveraged the critical platform of the Multistakeholder Hearing on NCDs and Mental Health (MSH) to raise their voices loud and clear — collectively, we delivered The Call to Lead sign-on letter, which is backed by more than 2.5 million voices from over 115 countries!

The MSH was convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly as a key preparatory meeting in the lead up to the 4th High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health (HLM4). The MSH provided a platform for Member States, UN agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to share their perspectives, experiences, and best practices while identifying priority actions to accelerate progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.4.

Throughout the week, a large delegation from NCDA and its members maximised their presence by organising advocacy workshops, side events, and meetings with permanent missions. We called on governments to mobilise investment, accelerate implementation, and deliver accountability on NCDs, ahead of the MSH. Particularly, NCDA's Capacity Development unit gathered 30 advocates from 24 organisations across 21 countries in an advocacy workshop to strategically coordinate efforts for effective collective advocacy. Afterwards, 85% of workshop survey respondents said they felt better equipped to take immediate steps for coordinated advocacy and campaigning across national, regional, and global levels. Beyond the workshop, advocates held 20 impactful meetings with UN Member States' permanent missions, sharing their national and regional priorities and affirming their readiness to support government representatives in capitals and New York in the HLM4 process.

At the MSH, the Call to Lead on NCDs was heard, shared, and echoed. NCDA and its members and partners took the floor during the open discussion to highlight the need for: meaningful engagement with youth, people with lived experience, and all aging populations represented; sustainable financing; stronger mental health integration, and governance free from industry interference and accountability mechanisms. Their interventions stressed the urgency of moving from rhetoric to tangible outcomes, especially for people living with NCDs and mental health conditions. Particularly, Lucia Feito Allonca (International Diabetes Federation), Regina Javier (Healthy Philippines Alliance), Maisha Hutton (Healthy Caribbean Coalition), Ferdinant Mbiydzanyuy (Africa NCDs Network), Paula Johns (ACT Brazil), Mansi Chopra (HRIDAY/Healthy India Alliance), Laura Curry (CS WG for the 2030 Agenda) and Florencia Leiva (Coalición América Saludable) represented the movement delivering bold statements from lived experience

and/or national alliance perspective. Having over 25 organisations aligning with our Call to Lead on NCDs in their interventions was heartwarming and filled the room with a powerful energy. You can read some of the interventions from the network [here](#) [1].

However, civil society actors remain concerned about how health-harming industries — Big Tobacco, alcohol, ultra-processed foods, and fossil fuels — are pushing efforts to influence the content of the Political Declaration of HLM4. The intervention of an alcohol industry representative was another reminder that collectively, civil society must continue calling on governments to protect health policy from the undue influence of industry.

The week ended with a civil society movement energised and more ready than ever to make governments deliver on promises:

“It was instrumental in sharpening our advocacy strategies, strengthening alliances, and building the momentum needed for a successful High-Level Meeting. The experience re-enforced the urgency in our pursuit of strong action on NCDs and equipped us with the tools, relationships, and messages to drive meaningful progress on NCDs and mental health,” said an advocate who participated in our workshop on AI.

Undoubtedly we demonstrated the strength of a unified civil society movement actively engaging in the HLM4 process, so let's keep the momentum going towards September and beyond!

The convening of NCDA advocates in New York City for the Advocacy Institute's workshop and for the MSH was possible thanks to NCDA's partnership with The Leona M. and Harry B. Hemsley Charitable Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Swedish International Development Agency and the Clean Air Fund.

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[1] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/statements-from-un-multi-stakeholder-hearing-on-ncds-and-mental-health>

[2] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/fr/taxonomy/term/639>